

Planning for a Healthy Baby

State employee Zelle Rodriguez doesn't like eating breakfast, but she's been making more of an effort to eat a regular morning meal lately. This is just one healthy behavior she's adopted since she and her husband began trying to conceive more than a year ago.

She's now getting ready to decorate a room for her first born son, due to arrive in just a few short weeks.

Health experts recommend that women of childbearing age and those currently pregnant adopt many healthy behaviors, but one of the most important is consuming the recommended amount of folic acid (a type of vitamin B).

"We all need folic acid," says Patrick Olise, Rapid

Reporting System program manager for the state's Birth Defects Monitoring program. "But it is really important for women who can get pregnant."

The U.S. Public Health Service and the March of Dimes recommend that women consume 400 micrograms of folic acid every day, beginning at least three months prior to conception and throughout the first four weeks of pregnancy.

A pre-conception health message

Rodriguez remembers hearing about the importance of folic acid from various sources—the media, friends and her doctor—prior to becoming pregnant. That's why she began taking a daily prenatal vitamin with folic acid several months before she became pregnant and has continued with it throughout the pregnancy. "This is really a pre-conception health message," says Melissa Selbst, director of Program Services and Public Affairs for the Arizona Chapter of the March of Dimes.

Available evidence indicates that consuming the recommended amount of folic acid can prevent nearly 70 percent of neural tube defects (NTDs).

A neural tube defect occurs when the tube containing the spinal cord fails to close as it is supposed to in the first 28 days of pregnancy. Conditions such as spina bifida, a leading cause of childhood paralysis, can occur as a result.

"That's why folic acid is so important—even before a woman knows she's pregnant," says Selbst. "We know that at least half of all pregnancies are unplanned. Many women don't even know they're pregnant until the neural tube is already formed."

More healthy behaviors

Birth defects affect about one in every 33 babies born in the U.S. each year. Many of the causes are unknown, but Olise recommends that all women planning to become pregnant have a pre-pregnancy checkup, and stop smoking, drinking alcohol and/or using illegal drugs.

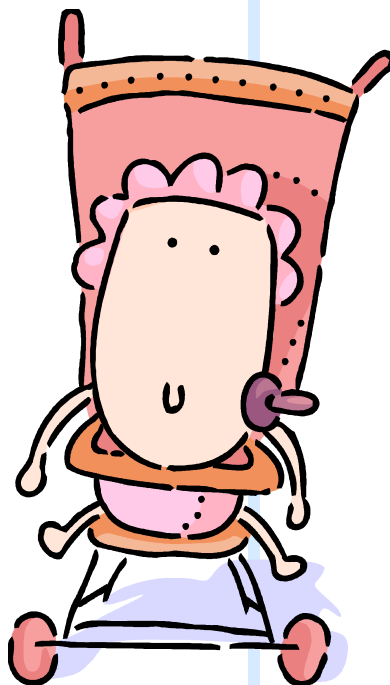
In addition, health experts recommend that pregnant women get regular prenatal care, eat a balanced diet with enough calories, get plenty of exercise, and that they gain enough weight (normal weight gain is 25 to 35 pounds during pregnancy). An admitted chocoholic, Rodriguez has decided to cut down on her sugar consumption since becoming pregnant by replacing the sugary foods with a fruit basket on her desk at work.

"It also helps that my husband Jim has been very supportive of me making healthy choices throughout the pregnancy," she says. "He reminds me to eat breakfast, walks with me at night and sometimes he even gives massages."

For more information about having a healthy baby, log onto www.marchofdimes.com. To find out more about the state's Employee Wellness program, visit their Web site at www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness.

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wellness

Free Skin Cancer Screening

Did you know that Arizona is second only to the country of Australia in reported cases of skin cancer? The Wellness program will now provide this important screening year-round.

This screening for is available at offices statewide by request (minimums do apply, check the website for more information).



All State employees are welcome to participate in this free screening. Skin cancer screening is performed by Banner Occupational Health, and includes:

- Specific assessment by a nurse practitioner or physician assistant. Participants will not be required to fully disrobe.
- Assessments of risk for skin cancer, including personal and family medical histories and lifestyle factors.
- Educational materials and counseling.

Screenings take approximately 10 minutes and they **do require an appointment**, please contact the appropriate person listed below to request an appointment:

Tucson– Thursday, January 5, 2006
9:00am-3:30pm Dept. of Transportation
3565 S. Broadmont Conference Room
Email SSpurlock@azdot.gov for an appointment.

Springerville– Monday, January 9, 2006
9:00am-3:30pm Dept. of Transportation
HWY 60 MP 389.9 Conference Room
Email TCastillo@azdot.gov to make an appointment.

Kingman– Monday, January 23, 2006
9:00am-3:30pm Dept. of Transportation
3660 E Andy Devine Bldg 3046 Classroom
Email jmcgehee@azdot.gov to make an appointment.

Most events you see posted, plus many others can be hosted at individual worksites across Arizona. If you are interested in having a Wellness event at your worksite, visit the Wellness website to learn [“How To Request and Schedule Worksite Events”](#) or call 602-771-9355.

Mini Health Screening at Work

All State employees are eligible to participate in mini health screenings. Confidential results will be mailed to your home. These screenings are FREE, except where prices are indicated:



- Height & weight; blood pressure; and percent of body fat (body composition).
- Cholesterol (total panel) and blood sugar **8-hour fasting is required for this blood draw**.
- Free osteoporosis screening for women 40 and older. \$35 for women under age 40.
- \$5 PSA screening (blood draw) for men 40 and older. \$40 for men under age 40.

NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED!

Nogales– Tuesday, January 10, 2006
7:00am-9:00am Dept. of Economic Security
2771 N Grand Conference Room

Phoenix– Friday, January 20, 2006
8:00am-11:00am Dept. of Environmental Quality
1110 W. Washington Room 250

Feldenkrais**Awareness Through Movement®**

Feldenkrais is helpful for people who experience pain from stress or injury. It can help people regain mobility and agility.

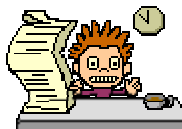
ATM classes are done lying on the floor and consist of gentle meditative movements. Each ATM class is different, focusing on a different aspect of functioning, from freeing the spine to expanding breathing. Through “guided attention” each person finds the movement or position that works best for him/her.

Phoenix– 4 Tuesdays, January 10-January 31, 2006 11:30am-12:30pm Arizona Supreme Court
1501 W Washington Exercise Room

This class has a \$20. copay and is open to State employees and eligible retirees. Please email wellness@azdoa.gov to register!

Open Classes in Phoenix**How to Survive Stress with Self-Massage
(1 hour)**

This free class takes you through quick relaxers for your mind and body. Participants receive a self-massage tool and a body scape map. By applying the self-massage pressure point techniques you are shown, you will be able to reduce your muscle pain and tension. This workshop is interactive, fast- paced, enlightening and fun.



Wednesday, January 18, 2006—12:00pm-1:00pm
Dept. of Water Resources—3550 N. Central
2nd Floor Conference Room

To register for this class, please email
drwallace@azwater.gov

**Fit and Fast Cooking
(1 hour)**

Class participants will receive delicious ideas and Fit and Fast Food recipes to keep you energized, satisfied and happy. A cooking demonstration is included. There will be a \$1.00 copay per person (paid at class).

Wednesday, January 18, 2005—Noon-1:00pm
Dept. of Gaming—202 E. Earll
Training Room

To register for this class, please call
Tim Weaver at 602-285-9980 x309.

**The Skinny About Diets
(1 hour)**

Are you lost in all the hype about the latest, most popular diets? This free program will take a look at the current “hot” diets that are being used for weight loss. It is designed to educate individuals about the truths and myths of dieting.

Tuesday, January 10, 2006— 11:00am-Noon
Dept. of Transportation—206 S 17th Ave
Auditorium

This is an open class and no registration is necessary, however please email swuertz@azdot.gov if you need directions to the location.

Ongoing Wellness Programs**Weight Watchers® at Work**

This program is presented as a 10-week series. All non-University employees are eligible to join an “at work” program for \$59.00. Spouses and retirees can attend worksite programs for \$90 plus \$10 for materials. Call Weight Watchers to learn about scheduled events: 602-248-0303, speak to an “at work” representative.

Massage Therapy

This program is open to all State employees. The cost is \$10 for a 15-minute massage and \$20 for a 30-minute massage.

National StresStation will travel to worksites with at least 15 interested employees (and/or family members). Call National StresStation at 480-990-1701 to discuss having this program at your worksite. Also, check the Wellness website for events scheduled in your county.

**Mobile On Site Mammography**

“Early detection is the best defense we have at this time for catching breast cancer in its earliest stages,” says Catherine Midgette, Executive Vice President of MOM. “If we find the cancer in its earliest stages, the patient has a 97 percent survival rate.” Mobile On-Site Mammography (MOM) travels to perform mammography screening at worksites across Arizona.

MOM will directly bill insurance, so there may be no out of pocket cost to you. Check with your insurance’s member service department for more information.

In January, we have a site in each of the following cities: Mesa, Florence and Phoenix. Check our website for more information.

Call MOM at 480-967-2676 or 1-800-285-0272 to schedule this service at your worksite. There is a minimum of 25 people required.

Reenergize Your Workday With a Stretch Break

Sitting at a desk all day, especially at a computer, can take its toll physically and mentally. There is a solution. Work stretch breaks into your workday to de-stress, reenergize, loosen stiff muscles, improve your circulation, and jump-start your brain. Below are some stretching routines to get you started. With any new physical routine, start out slowly. Do a variety of movements and stretches.

Start by holding each stretch for five to ten seconds and repeat each three to five times or as noted below. Increase the number of repetitions when you are ready for them.

Whole Body Stretch—While standing with your arms at your side, inhale and slowly reach up to toward the ceiling with both arms. Hold the position for five seconds. Then return to the starting position.

Shoulders and Back Stretch—Sitting upright with your hands clasped behind your head, gently pull your elbows back as far as you can hold them in position.

Neck Stretch—Sitting upright with shoulders relaxed looking straight ahead, slowly lower your head to one shoulder, hold, and then return to upright. Repeat on the other shoulder. Slowly drop your head forward lowering your chin to your chest and then return to starting point.

Finger Stretch—While sitting or standing, gently stretch your hands out, palms down, and spreading your fingers straight and apart. Hold for a five seconds. Then make a fist with each hand and curve your wrist gently inward. Release.

Wrist Stretch—Standing, place one arm at your side with the fingers extended straight and flat. Grasp your forearm with the other hand. Gently bend your free hand upward from the wrist and hold for five seconds. Relax. Repeat three times. Repeat the stretching with the other wrist.

Shoulder Rolls—While sitting or standing, slowly roll both shoulders backward, down and around in a circular motion completing three circles. Then slowly roll both shoulders forward, down and around in a circular motion completing three circles.

Foot Rotations—While sitting, slowly rotate each foot around in circles—both directions.

Arm Rotations—While sitting or standing, hold your arms straight out on each side of your body and make small circles with your arms. Circle forward several times and then circle backwards several times.

Storing Foods: Which Plastics Are Safer?

Plastic is the most widely used material in the United States. You will find that plastic containers are popular for a variety of packaged food items, water, beverages, and oils.

Some types of plastics are safer than others when it comes to food storage. Some are less likely to leach health-threatening chemicals from the plastic into foods and beverages.

The Green Guide provides the following guidelines on plastic container safety for food storage. You can identify the type of plastic in a container by the recycling code number on the bottom.



Safer plastic containers for food and beverage storage include those with the recycling code:

- #1 (PETE: polyethylene terephthalate)
- #2 (HDPE: high-density polyethylene)
- #4 (LDPE: low-density polyethylene)
- #5 (PP: polypropylene)

Plastic containers to avoid with foods and beverages include those with the recycling code:

- #3 (PVC: polyvinyl chloride)
- #6 (PS: polystyrene)
- #7 (PC: polycarbonate)

Source: *The Green Guide*, The Green Guide Institute, www.thegreenguide.com.

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Be Well Stay Well.